

## Inverting Sentence Order I

In most sentences, the subject precedes the verb. In **inverted sentences**, the verb precedes the subject. To create sentence variety, you can sometimes invert the subject and verb and move a part of the predicate to the beginning of the sentence. In the following examples, notice that the verb precedes the subject, giving more prominence to other parts of speech at the beginning of the sentence.

**Beautiful** was the landscape. (adjective)

**In silence** is found peace. (prepositional phrase)

**Flying high above us** was the majestic bald eagle. (participial phrase)

In questions, one of three kinds of words usually begins a sentence: a verb, a helping verb, or a question word, such as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, or *how*. When a question begins with a verb or a helping verb, sentence order is always inverted. But when it begins with a question word, sentence order may not be inverted.

**Verb**                **Is** it time for lunch yet?

**Helping verb**    **Did** you hear that?

**Question word**   **Who** wants salad?

**EXERCISE** Each item below begins with a sentence model taken from literature. Rewrite the sentence that follows to create a new sentence that matches the structure of the literature model.

**Sample** Farther down the street was Ping Yuen Fish Market.

Amy Tan, "Rules of the Game"

Three varieties of tomato grew in her garden.

**Revision** In her garden grew three varieties of tomato.

1. On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat.

O. Henry, "The Gift of the Magi"

The streamers came down; the signs came down.

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2. Only in the Eighth Ward did the males weaken.

Margaret Truman, "The United States vs. Susan B. Anthony"

One could get in only with an officially stamped ticket.

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3. In the middle of the land was the great Sky Tree.

Joseph Bruchac, "The Sky Tree"

A tiny hosta plant grew at the edge of the clearing.

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## Revising with Style

### LESSON

14  
Continued

4. Sad were the lights in the houses opposite.

Katherine Mansfield, "A Cup of Tea"

The children in the yard next door are happy.

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5. Directly opposite him, on the other side of the enclosed space, were two doors, exactly alike and side by side.

Frank R. Stockton, "The Lady, or the Tiger?"

The opera stars stood onstage, in front of the curtain, smiling and bowing deeply before the crowd.

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6. When he telephoned her brother Donnie, was he hoping for her to answer?

Anne Tyler, "With All Flags Flying"

She was expecting him to laugh when she made fun of him.

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7. In the front yard was a huge oak tree that Luis remembered having climbed during the funeral to get away from people.

Judith Ortiz Cofer, "Catch the Moon"

A small bronze statue that Maria recalled having studied one evening to inspire her own art was at the city park.

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8. Also lurking around Pius's unpretentious mud hut were newspaper reporters.

Barbara Kimenye, "The Winner"

The new puppy was not yet settling into our comfortable little house.

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9. Isn't that the funniest thing you have ever heard?

V. S. Naipaul, "B. Wordsworth"

This isn't the best peach she has ever tasted.

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## Revising with Style

### LESSON

14  
Continued

10. On my desk lay the lance points of ice age hunters and the heavy leg bone of a fossil bison.

Loren Eiseley, "The Angry Winter"

Her two grandparents and her four-year-old brother stood alongside her.

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11. Out came the servants from the kitchen.

Doris Lessing, "A Mild Attack of Locusts"

The lights went on in every room of the house.

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12. Many and long were the conversations between Lord Byron and Shelley, to which I was a devout but nearly silent listener.

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

The path to the base camp, where one could find a cot and a warm meal, was steep and slippery.

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